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Uganda Community Volunteers

Adventure



Relaxation



Culture



Trip Name: Uganda Community Volunteers **Trip Code:** UGCO **Duration:** From 2 weeks

Trip Highlights

- Experience local life in Uganda
- Using the skills you have to make a difference to the lives of the children
- Getting to know the locals and experience their renowned hospitality and enthusiasm
- Feel the rewards of helping those who really need and appreciate it



Overview

Dedicate your energy and skills to helping some of the world's poorest children. Assist this community in Uganda – support and improve the welfare of orphaned, vulnerable, or disadvantaged children and their families, many of whom have been affected by HIV/AIDS and live under extremely impoverished circumstances.

You will also be there to help raise awareness on children's rights and strengthen child protection mechanisms, or spend your time teaching basic subjects and organising school activities. This is one of the most rewarding projects that you could volunteer on.

Destination Info

Uganda: concentrated Africa in one gap year – all the African best bits in one country.

It's where the rolling savannah of East Africa meets the steamy jungle of West Africa. It has the source of the Nile. It has the highest mountains on the continent – the Mountains of the Moon in Rwenzori. It's one of the few safe wild places left for the mighty mountain gorilla (and you can get in as close as possible in Bwindi National Park).

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It's picture-postcard beautiful. Its people have a tradition of hospitality and an easy-going nature that will make you delighted you chose Uganda for your student travel.

Itinerary



Your day as a volunteer in the Uganda community is obviously dictated either by the school day or by the schedule of the organisation you're working with.

You'll be up and about around 7, having breakfast and getting ready for the day ahead and leaving around 9. You'll have a chance to relax over some lunch around midday before the afternoon sessions start around 1. The evenings are yours.

This hand-on programme gives you the opportunity to make a direct and much-needed contribution to the community in Uganda. We're supporting a number of different programme primarily based in Wakiso District near Kampala. The programme co-ordinator will assess your skills and take into account your preferences and recommend the project you'll have the biggest impact on.



The project works to raise awareness of the rights of children, strengthening child protection and improving the welfare of orphaned, vulnerable or disadvantaged children and their families. Inevitably, many of the project's clients are living lives ravaged by HIV and AIDS.

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You'll be making home visits to assess needs and create needs profiles - important because they drive the funding and sponsorship effort without which none of this work would have any impact.



If you're studying business here's a fabulous opportunity to put your learning to good use in the community in Uganda. The project trains young people to market their skills; access small bank loans and start small businesses; shows them how to be creative and enterprising and learn from each other; and develop the habits of saving and an understanding of changing economic realities.



You'll join the team at a vocational skills training centre, set up by community volunteers to support the ever increasing number of orphaned and vulnerable children and give them the ability to lift themselves out of the poverty trap. The centre improves the welfare of HIV and AIDS orphans and children in the Uganda community by equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to be independent – giving them the chance of a better future. Could be anything and everything from computer skills training to bricklaying to carpentry to improved agricultural practices to tailoring and dress making.



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We're involved with three schools – one urban and two rural, and you'll be providing invaluable support to hard-pressed teachers, who have to cope with seriously limited resources and are in desperate need of your help. The support you can give doesn't end with teaching basic subjects though. You can get involved in after-school activity, help in workshops and take part in local community development schemes. You'll also have the chance to work with an African children's rights advocacy movement, working with teachers and school administrations to promote children's rights, child protection policies and children's parliaments. . Schools in Uganda has three academic terms; Term 1- February to April; Term 2- Last week of May to August; Term 3- Last week of September to First week of December.

Accommodation

You will stay in a comfortable, but basic shared volunteer house with up to three other volunteers in each room in Wakiso District near Kampala. By western standards, you will find the houses very rudimentary at first, but will also find it a luxury, in comparison to those you will be visiting on the project. The houses do have flush toilets and showers, but there are often water shortages in this part of Uganda, so be prepared to collect your own in buckets if you want to wash!! Power cuts are also not uncommon, so remember to bring a torch. This is Africa!

The houses are situated in safe areas. There are staff at the houses who act as housekeepers and cooks, though volunteers are also expected to do their bit to keep the house clean and tidy. You will also have a night watchman for your security. You will be taking local taxis, accompanied by your fellow volunteers and a member of staff, to rural locations.

Programme Services and Facilities

Valuables

You will be able to leave any valuables that you have in the safe, located in our partner offices. We advise that you place your valuables inside a sealed brown envelope, upon which you write your name and the details of what is contained within the envelope, for security purposes.

You will have access to a project laptop, specifically funded and purchased by the Real Gap team. You can use this laptop to write your assessments, fundraising proposals and create further information for future volunteers. You will also be able to download photos, which will be used to further support your fundraising documents.

This laptop is stored at our partner office within the safe and can be accessed during the day, providing that you sign it out. The computer must then be returned to the safe before the end of the day and signed back in, for security purposes.

Local Transport

We advise that you take public taxis or buses for personal travel. There are local motorbike taxis but these can be very unsafe and we recommend you avoid usage of these. All personal travel will be at your own risk and we advise that you tell colleagues where you are going.

Internet

There is Internet access roughly 1km away from your project, around a ten-minute walk. This will cost around \$1 for half an hour.

Telephone

The international dialling code for Uganda is +256.

To place an outgoing call, direct dialled international call, dial +44 for the UK, +49 for Germany, followed by the telephone number. For example to call Real Gap Experience dial +44 1892 516164 / +49 69 222226 475.

Telephone connections are fairly good, however not always reliable. The three major mobile telephone providers are MTN, Uganda Telecom (UTL), Zaine or Warid. Therefore, it is a good idea to take out a mobile phone and purchase a local pay as you go SIM card, so that its possible to call or text home cheaply. The SIM card will cost you about US\$3.00 and an international call only US\$0.50 per minute. However, if you plan to text or call home regulatly, it could be cheaper to purchase a new mobile phone in Uganda, at the cost of approximately £15-30 / 20-41€.

If you are planning to use a local SIM card, please ensure your mobile phone is set up with internatinal roaming and unlocked before you depart, so that you may use a pay-as-you-go SIM while you are away.

Laundry

You will be able to get your laundry done whilst at the house. You may either hand-wash items yourselves, or the staff may wash items for you for a small fee.

Electricity

Uganda uses 240V and a frequency of 50Hz; the plugs are compatible with the standard three rectangular British plug. There will also be frequent power cuts in Uganda so you will need to remain patient.

Meals

Three meals per day are provided. Breakfast is usually on a self-service basis, consisting of fruit and breads etc. Lunch is usually taken back at the volunteer house or as a packed lunch at your project, while dinner will be a hot meal, prepared for you by the cook.

What's Included

- Airport transfers to and from Entebbe Airport, Uganda
- Orientation on arrival
- Project transport, as required
- All accommodation
- All Meals on the project
- 24 hour support number



What's Not Included

- Travel insurance
- All flights
- Airport transfers if you arrive or depart outside of the set dates and times
- Visas



Is This Trip For You?

You may be the only volunteer at your chosen project at any one time. However, you will still have the full support of your in-country team and those at the project. If you are looking for a group volunteering experience we have plenty of options for you to consider.

What to Pack

Please note that this kit list is intended to help you plan what you may need to take with you and therefore, you may not need all of the listed items on your travels nor is it exhaustive.

Also, please be aware that the weather can change considerably from winter to summer and you should pack according to when you are travelling to ensure that you have the appropriate clothing.

Personal Admin

- Passport, insurance certificates and personal documentation
- Photocopies of all the above to be left at home with your next of kin
- Spending money
- US Dollars in cash for your visa (in hand luggage)
- Proof of inoculations (please speak to your GP about necessary immunisations)
- Secure, waterproof bag for documents and money: sealable plastic bags will do

General

- Personal hygiene kit, toiletries and towel
- Sleeping bag – useful in winter months or weekend trips (optional)
- Sewing kit for mosquito nets at the house, or your own mosquito net to hang
- Silk or Cotton Liner: Ideal for hot nights or as an extra layer to your sleeping bag
- Sunglasses (high UV protection)
- Sun cream (high factor needed)
- Small torch (head torch is preferable)
- Diary and writing pens
- Camera/batteries/film or memory card
- Water bottle – at least 75cl
- Day pack/rucksack for everyday use
- Mobile phone – set for roaming
- Personal stereo
- Plug adaptor
- Binoculars for game viewing
- Alarm clock/watch
- Pegs, washing line and travel wash for clothes (biodegradable recommended)
- Travel Guide, such as Lonely Planet or Rough Guide
- The evenings can be quiet so bring books, cards, board games etc to play

Clothing

- Sets of outdoor loose fitting cotton clothes with full arm and leg cover for cooler mornings and evenings
- Shorts and/or trousers for project work
- T-shirts for project work
- A pair of boots or sturdy trainers
- Gardening gloves to protect your hands
- Casual clothes for the weekends
- Flip flops / sandals
- Swimwear
- Sun hat / Bandana
- Underwear – enough for at least 7 days, possibly more
- Pyjamas/nightwear
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm clothes for winter and early mornings.

Medical Kit

- Hand sanitiser
- Wet wipes
- Anti-malarial tablets
- Personal First Aid Kit
- Personal medication e.g. anti malarial tablets/prescription drugs/inhalers
- Painkillers
- Contact lenses and solution if necessary
- Plasters
- Lip Balm with SPF
- Tweezers (not in hand luggage!)
- Scissors (not in hand luggage!)
- Sanitary products for women if necessary
- Mosquito repellent (ensure it contains DEET or equivalent)
- Ear Plugs – in case you sleep next to a snorer!

Please Note: We recommend you take some shirts/blouses, trousers/long skirts and a good pair of shoes or sandals for any teaching you may be involved in. This is to show respect of African culture and also gain respect from the children you will be working with. You can wear casual clothing in your spare time, though these must be appropriate.

Minimum Age

Minimum age 18 years, maximum decided on potential participants' health.

Minimum Numbers

There are no minimum numbers on the trip.

Please note: you may be the only volunteer at your chosen project at any one time. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact us

Flights

Your flight to Uganda should arrive before 1pm at Entebber airport on your programme start date. Your return flight or onward travel should be arranged on your programme end date. If your flights arrive outside of this time on the date specified, you will need to pay an additional transfer fee and for accommodation near the airport.

To book your flights, please contact your sales advisor who will do their best to get you the best deal on the day. Please provide them with your full name as it is stated in your passport. Before you make the call please make sure you have your required departure dates, return dates and other details you may require.

It is important that once you have booked your flights you add these details to your online account or alternatively you can contact us with your departure date, the flight number and arrival time at your destination.

FAQs

1. What is the accommodation like?

You will stay in a comfortable but basic shared volunteer house and will be sharing with up to three other volunteers. The houses do have flush toilets and showers, but be prepared for water shortages and cold showers in this part of Uganda!

2. What food will I be provided?

Breakfast is usually on a self- service basis, consisting of fruit and breads etc. Packed lunches can be provided, or you may eat at one of the schools. Dinner will be a hot meal, prepared for you by the cook.

3. What about washing my clothes?

You will be able to get your laundry done whilst at the house. You may either hand-wash items yourselves, or the staff may wash items for you for a small fee.

4. How much spending money should I take?

We recommend that you take around £50-70 per week.



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Police Check

This trip requires a Police Check to be carried out - please contact us for further information on how to do this.

Support & Advice

Your safety is paramount which is why all our programs have been visited and assessments have been conducted to ensure any major risks have been minimized.

In addition, you will have access to a 24 hour emergency contact number so you can contact one of our staff at any time should you need to. In addition our overseas partners and coordinators are on hand in-country to assist you.

Financial Security

We know that the last thing you want to worry about when you're planning your trip of a lifetime is whether your money is in safe hands. As a leading global gap year provider it's our job to make sure your finances are secure, so when you book with us you can be confident that we do just that.

Real Gap Experience is part of TUI Travel Plc, one of the largest travel organisations in the world, and these days in the travel industry, large means secure.

Insurance

Whether you're traveling for two weeks or two years, trekking the Amazon in Ecuador or on safari in Africa, insurance is an essential part of your adventure and will help you enjoy your travels, secure in the knowledge that you have the protection you need. In fact, everyone traveling with us must have adequate cover before their trip begins.

Of course you are free to buy insurance from any provider, however at Real Gap Experience, we have partnered with World Nomads to offer policies that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of global travel. If you think you're already covered by an existing policy, such as those offered by credit card providers, check the policy wording very carefully to ensure it covers you for your Real Gap Experience.

For more information on travel insurance please contact us to speak to one of our travel advisors.

Money Matters

The currency in Uganda is the Ugandan Shilling (USh). There are coins of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 (USh) and bills of 1,000, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000 and 50, 000 (USh).

US Dollars, the Pound Sterling and major credit cards are accepted by most large hotels, restaurants, travel agencies and shops in urban areas. ATMs are available in larger cities and credit card cash advances are only really available at banks in Kampala.

Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant \$1.00
Domestic Beer (0.5 litre draught) \$2.00
Coke/Pepsi (0.33 litre bottle) \$0.50
Water (0.33 litre bottle) \$0.50

(Prices quoted in US Dollar)

Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 12 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

All visitors to Uganda require a visa with the exception of African nationals. Citizens of the European Union and USA can get a 90 day single or double entry Tourist Visa. These can be obtained on arrival at all major land borders or at the international airport at Entebbe.

All other nationalities should consult their nearest Uganda Embassy and High Commission for details on visa requirements.

Cultural Considerations

Religion

According to the National Census of 2002, Christians of all denominations made up 85.1% of Uganda's population, the Catholic Church being the largest number of adherents (41.9%). The second largest religion of Uganda is Islam, with the Muslims representing 12.1% of the population. Judaism is also practiced by a small number of native Ugandans; known to most as the Abayudaya.

Clothing

Dress is informal, and casual lightweight clothes are accepted for all occasions. However, please note that you may be working in areas where the locals expect a certain dress code and you may have to make house visits. In these cases you are asked to respect their customs and wear the appropriate levels of dress, e.g. long sleeves and legs covered to the knees.

Smoking and Alcohol

Smoking and drinking is tolerated in Uganda and you will find that you will be able to get imported beer cheaply in most establishments. Heavy lagers such as Nile Special and Club are brewed at the source of the Nile. In the 1960s Uganda gained an international reputation for distilling a national gin called Uganda. Although smoking and drinking are tolerated, please respect other volunteers when doing so. Smoking is not permitted inside the house. Drinking is only permissible in moderation and must not impact on your volunteer work during the week. While we want you to have fun in your free time, antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated at the project.

Drugs

It is absolutely forbidden to bring drugs into Uganda. Always keep an eye on your luggage while travelling. Never bring anyone else's luggage through customs. If you get caught there is little chance that you will walk away without punishment. As in most countries, Uganda has very strict rules when it comes to the possession of drugs. All drugs, including 'soft' drugs like marijuana, are illegal. Please do NOT use any illegal substances whilst travelling – it is not worth the risk and is not acceptable at the project.

Greeting

Pleasantries are taken seriously and using 'hello' and 'goodbye' can go a long way to making friends and being accepted. Please take the time to learn a few local words and show that you are keen to fit in. There is also a big emphasis on shaking hands. The Western way of doing this will be fine, but you are likely to pick up a few local variations!

On the whole, Ugandans are easy-going people - any social errors are unlikely to cause offence, so please do not worry!

Vaccinations & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad. The risks to your health whilst travelling will vary depending on your general health and the type of activities you are going to be partaking in and the length of your stay.

Since we are not medically qualified, it is recommended that you consult with your Doctor or a recognised Travel Medical Advisory Service who will assess your particular health risks before recommending vaccines and/or anti-malarial tablets and advising you on what precautions you should take.

Safety

Unfortunately, tourists are always targets for pickpockets and thieves. Please educate yourself about Africa and Uganda in particular, before you leave, so that you can be alert for all types of situations. General travel safety rules are below.

- Avoid travelling alone, especially at night
- Find out where the unsafe areas are and avoid them
- When travelling keep all-important documents and valuables in a safe place, like an inner hidden pocket or money belt
- Carry only as much cash as you think you will need for the day.
- Don't wear expensive jewellery or watches
- Be wary of people who seem too friendly too fast
- Keep cameras out of sight. Always keep bags and purses in your sight.
- Before swimming, ask how safe the area is.

ATM Theft

It is very likely that you will need to withdraw cash at some point during your travels. Please be cautious when withdrawing money from an ATM and ensure that you are vigilant of other people near the ATM, especially those that offer unsolicited assistance if your card is detained. It has been recognised that individuals are operating unlawful withdrawals by placing 'traps' in ATMs whereby personal bank cards are being detained, causing the victim to believe their card transaction has not been completed, and leaving their bank card in the ATM which is then later retrieved by the thief.

If your card is confiscated or you are concerned that your card has been tampered with, please report immediately

to the bank or cancel your card.

Language Guide

The official national language of Uganda is English, which is taught in grade schools and used in the courts of law and many business corporations. Uganda has at least forty-three different languages in usage, with Luganda being the most common, especially in central Uganda. Access to economic and political power is almost impossible without having mastered that language. Kiswahili is relatively widespread, particularly in Kampala, and was made an official language in September 2005.

We suggest you obtain a Lonely Planet or language guide for the destination(s) you are travelling to.

English - *Kiswahili*

Hello - *Salama/Jambo*

How are you? - *Hujambo*

I'm fine - *Sijambo*

Thank you (very much) - *Asanta (sana)*

Please - *Tafadhali*

Yes / No - *Ndiyo / Hapana*

Goodbye - *Kwa heri*

Food & Drink

Traditional food is fun to try and easy to enjoy. Local residents are able to prepare a range of foods, including numerous vegetables, potatoes, bananas and fruits. A popular local dish is Matooke (green bananas), which are traditionally wrapped in the banana leaves and steamed. Matooke is prepared alongside various vegetables, fresh fish, meat or entrails. It is best served with a ground peanut sauce. In Uganda ugali, (food made from maize flour) is called posho and is generally less popular than matooke.

There are a plethora of tropical fruits, including mangoes, paw paws, pineapples, oranges, avocados, lemons, sweet banana and passion fruits, among others. Nakasero hosts most of Ugandans fruits, which are also exported over seas. Purchasing food at roadside/market stalls can be a good way to experience more traditional food.

The traditional staple diet in Africa is meat and carbohydrates. If you are a vegetarian you will be catered for with lots of fresh root vegetables such as yams and potatoes and fruits. However, please be aware that your meals towards the end of your programme may become a little repetitive so perhaps it may be worth buying a few of your favourite snacks whilst you are in Africa.

There is a lot of fresh fruit in Africa, which is extremely cheap to buy for a quick snack or nutritional lunch so it may be worth picking some up from the market quite cheaply for your daily vitamin fix. However, please be aware that fresh items for salads etc are hard to come by in Africa, although the project leaders will try to get this as often as possible for you.

Please remember to let us know before you depart if you have any special dietary requirements.

Public Holidays

When planning your trip, you should be aware of the major national holidays celebrated throughout the country. However, although businesses and government offices are closed on public holidays, tourist attractions and shops are almost never closed. The main impact on the tourist of these holidays is the increased competition for travel and accommodation from Ugandan's who use long weekends to get away from the big towns.

To view a list of the public holidays for Uganda, please see the link below:

<http://www.worldtravelguide.net/uganda/public-holidays>

Weather

Uganda's climate is typically tropical averaging at around 26°C throughout the year. With all the lush greenery along the shores of Lake Victoria it's no surprise that this is one of the country's wettest areas, with the hilly areas of Kabale escaping most of the rains. There are two rainy seasons a year; short rains fall between March and May and long rains fall between September and November. The hottest and best time of year to visit is between December and February.

Time

Uganda is three hours ahead of GMT.

In Africa, time is not a priority like it is in much of the western world - there is a saying that Africa works to 'Africa Time', which basically means you must exercise a lot of patience! If a boat is due to leave at 12pm, don't be surprised if it still hasn't a couple of hours later... keep an open mind, and arrive in Africa 'expecting the unexpected'.

Electricity

Electricity in Uganda is 240 Volts and frequency 50 Hertz. Devices that do not accept this voltage will need to be used with an adapter.

Outlets in Uganda generally accept 1 type of plug:



Two parallel flat pins with ground pin

Trip Note Disclaimer

The information contained in this trip note has been compiled with great care and is provided in good faith.



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Any itinerary featured is correct at time of release. However, our itineraries may change as we make improvements that result from travellers' comments, our own research or from time to time as a result of recommended travel advice.

You can rest assured that it is always our goal to provide you with the most rewarding trip and experience ever!

Our Details

If you have any questions about this trip please do not hesitate to contact us and we'll be happy to answer them.

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